Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ASMARA 00945 101530Z

47
ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 CU-02 OCE-00 CCO-00 OCL-00 /062 W
---------- 012849
P 101450Z DEC 74
FM AMCONSUL ASMARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3024
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0945

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET
SUBJECT: ERITREAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. LOCAL SOURCES REPORT THAT CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR AMANUEL AMDEMICAEL MAY SOON BE REPLACED. INITIAL REPORT CAME FROM RELIABLE SOURCE WITH AIR FORCE CONTACTS. CONFIRMATION CAME FROM NAVAL OFFICER WHO MENTIONED BG GETACHEN NADOW, NEW GROUND FORCES CO, AS POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT. ATO AMANUEL HELD MEETING LAST WEEK WITH VILLAGE ELDERS TO GET THEM TO REQUEST THE ELF/PLF TO COME FORWARD FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WHILE THE ELDERS WELCOMED THE IDEA OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, THEY SAID THE OVERTURE SHOULD COME FROM ADDIS ABABA. THE NORTHERN DIRG IS HOLDING SIMILAR MEETING WITH ELDERS TODAY. THE DIRG'S MESSAGE TO THE ELDERS IS TO GET THE ELF/PLF OUT OF THE VILLAGES. SINCE THE DEATH OF GEN. AMAN, THE ELF/PLF HAS GAINED OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF THE ERITREAN PEOPLE. STUDENTS ARE FLOCKING TO JOING THE PLF IN DROVES. SINCE THE ELDERS CAN NOT BANISH ELF/PLF FROM THEIR VILLAGES IN FACE OF PRO-ELF/PLF SENTIMENT, AND ARMED STRENGTH OF ELF/PLF, IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION. A CURIOUS RUMOR CIRCULATING IN ASMARA IS THAT GEN. AMAN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ASMARA 00945 101530Z

DID NOT DIE ON 23 NOV., BUT ESCAPED AND IS NOW IN HIDING.

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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WHILE I BELIEVE THIS TO BE WISHFUL THINKING ON PART OF LOCAL POPULACE, THE FACT THAT HIS BODY WAS NOT RETURNED ONLY HELPS THE RUMOR SPREAD.

2. ON THE EVENING OF 9 DEC. AN AIR FORCE ENLISTED MAN WAS SHOT IN ASMARA, AND LATER DIED IN THE HOSPITAL. LOCAL SOURCE REPORTS THAT DECEASED WAS A STUDENT OF, AND ONE OF THE MURDERERS OF, DR. PETROS HABTEMICAEL, A UNIV. OF ASMARA PROFERROS WHO WAS KILLED ON 8 NOV. IN ASMARA.

3. DURING FIRST WEEK OF DEC., AIR FORCE OFFICERS AND NCO'S BEGAN MOVING INTO HOUSING ON TRACT A, KAGNEW STATION. TRACT A HOUSING WAS PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED ONLY THE ETH NAVY, WHOSE ENLISTED MEN RESENT AIR FORCE PRESENCE. SEVERAL FIGHTS BETWEEN ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE TWO GROUPS HAVE OCCURRED. NAVY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS ARE BARRED BY AIR FORCE FROM ENTERING AIR FORCE PORTION OF THE SMALL HOUSING AREA. THE SOURCE OF THIS PARA IS A NAVAL OFFICER.

COMMENT: ETHNIC STRIFE EXISTS WITHIN BOTH AIR FORCE AND NAVY, WITH THE FORMER HAVING WORST PROBLEM.

4. MAAG SGT REPORTS THAT EHT AIRLINES DC-3 WAS UNLOADING MILITARY SUPPLIES AT 1600 HRS TODAY AT THE ASMARA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. HE ADDED THAT PLANE WAS HEAVILY SURROUNDED BY MILITARY.
PERRY

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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